



Friends of Webster Trails

FWT Newsletter - Spring 2023



Michael A. Johnson Nature Preserve with Steward Norma Platt

Upcoming Events

SA 5/20 – FWT Work Day

Making/finishing trail at State Road. Meet at State Road west of Salt at 9:00 am

SA 6/3 Michael A. Johnson Nature Preserve

Dedication and opening. 9:00 am
(See article at end of this newsletter)

SA 6/17 – FWT Work Day

Whiting Road Nature Preserve trails

FWT Newsletter – Spring 2023

President's Column

The warmer temperatures are here and I am happy to report we have already completed our first FWT Trail Workday of the year, and held two family fun events on Earth Day, April 22, 2023! Thank you to all those who came out and made these mornings so successful. I speak for the FWT Board when I say we are excited for 2023. We have a few new events coming. At our Four Mile Creek Preserve, Trail Steward Dennis Kuhn is planning a new themed group hike in August. With a date to be determined in the near future, there will be a ribbon cutting celebration/ hike for the new Michael A. Johnson Trail which was established last year. The Re-Tree Committee is populating our calendar with tree planting events. In conjunction with these new activities, we will continue our most popular annual events one of which being our Fall Hot Cocoa Hike. With all of our events we strive to highlight our beautiful Webster Trails, introduce new people to our trails, and bring out our membership and the greater community to enjoy our amazing local natural resources.

Each January and February the FWT Board and Trail Stewards collaborate to identify and prioritize our trail maintenance and trail building projects for the year. This year we were given an additional task by the Parks and Recreation Dept to create our 5 Yr. Plan. Parks and Rec will incorporate our goals into their comprehensive plan. This was a great opportunity for us to think of the bigger picture and reflect on supporting our mission with a longer view in mind. As we are kicking off 2023, I would like to highlight two of the goals we identified in our 5-year plan and ask your help in achieving them. They are Membership Development and increasing Trail Workday participation with non FWT Board members.

Like you, I love our trails, and I am out enjoying them most weeks of the year. Our FWT Mission is close to my heart, and I want to see our open spaces and trails respectfully and thoughtfully maintained and enjoyed for generations to come. For years our membership numbers remained just below 200 members. I am proud to report we are over 200 now, but only slightly. Our 5-year goal is to get our membership up to 400. As you are aware, our FWT membership is at minimal cost, and we are a 100% volunteer organization. Maintaining this low-cost membership has been a standing priority for the FWT Board. With our events we want to raise awareness of FWT. With greater visibility I believe new members will

follow. If you have friends and family who hike, bike or run our local trails often, maybe suggest to them that they become a member of the Friends. If you see an opportunity for us to grow our membership, please contact me. We would welcome new ideas.

Regarding Trail Workday participation, we are fortunate to have an incredibly dedicated board and group of Trails Stewards. These folks not only lead the workdays but are participating in the work. We are also so grateful to our school groups and regular volunteers who show up for us each year and do incredibly good work. Our goal is to get more new folks out on Trail workdays and to establish a deeper list of trail maintenance volunteers. We are sharing our Trail Work Schedule in this Newsletter. Please consider joining us for one trail workday this year. We understand and respect that in our world today, folks and families are really busy. If you happen to have a free morning one weekend this summer, or fall, check out our calendar and consider spending it with us out on the trails. We would love to have you company.

My last update for this spring is that we are building relationships and partnerships with wonderful organizations in Webster, including the Webster Library, Parks and Rec, and WHEN (Webster Health and Education Network). We want to create programs and events to reflect our members interests. One of my professional goals this year is to listen. So, I ask, what programs or events would you enjoy participating in on our trails? Would you be interested in a storybook hour on the trails? Would you like to more learn about the history of our trails? Would you like focused hikes highlighting trees and native plants? Over this next year reach out with your ideas. I am all ears.

Together let's work towards our goals, support our Mission and have some fun in 2023!

Membership News - Denise Billsback

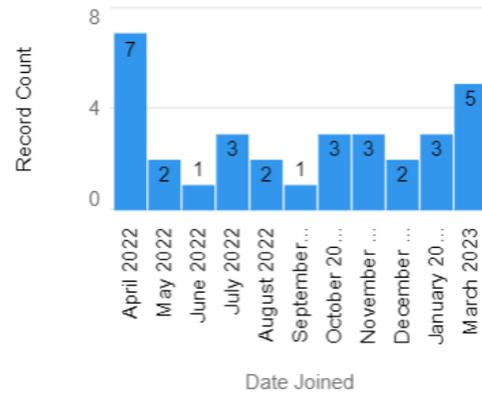
Total membership is currently 223 active members. We have 2 large donations so far this year totaling \$1,150. A few new members join every month. This is the time of year when we do most of the work on our trails. Many hands make light work. Check out our website for workday information. Emails are sent out to the members 1-2 weeks in advance describing location and work to be done. Think about helping at one of our upcoming workdays.

FWT Newsletter - Spring 2023

Volunteer Hours for 2022 were 1118. Thus far in 2023 115 hours reported.



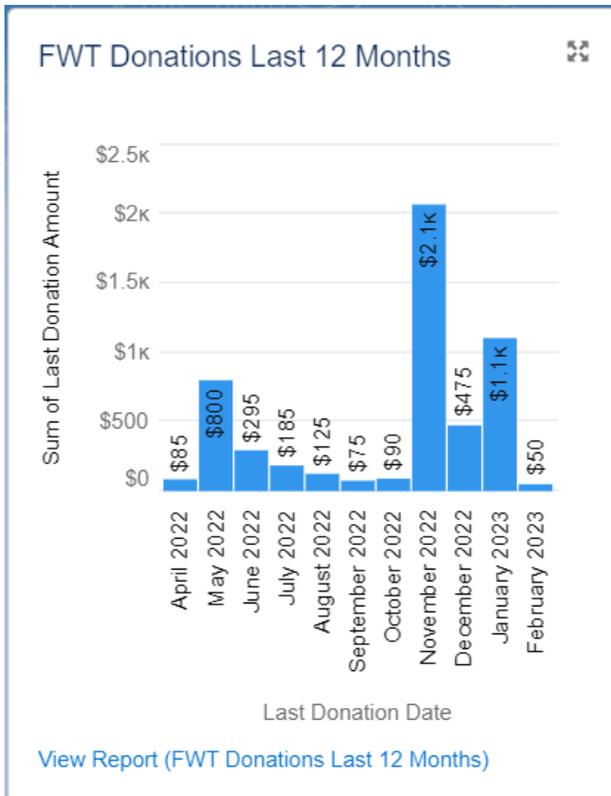
FWT New Members Last 12 Months



[View Report \(FWT New Members Last 12 Months\)](#)

Treasurer's Report – Chris and Lynn Peterson

The cash balance includes grant funding to facilitate Seasonal purchases including the trailer for lawnmower.





Friends of Webster Trails

For: March 2023

	Mth	YTD	YTD Prior Yr
Income Statement			
Donations			
Memberships - PayPal	\$2,693	\$2,693	\$439
Memberships - Checks	\$0	\$570	\$336
Amazon Smile	\$0	\$17	\$24
Interest Earned on Saving	\$1	\$3	\$0
Total Donations	\$2,694	\$3,283	\$799
Expenses:			
Community Arts Day	\$0	\$0	\$0
IRS Filing Fee	\$0	\$0	\$0
Retree Project	(\$1,064)	(\$1,064)	\$0
Mower / Trailer	\$0	\$0	(\$5,000)
Supplies	(\$121)	(\$249)	(\$269)
McAllister sign	\$0	\$0	\$0
PayPal Fees	\$0	\$0	(\$12)
Total Expenses	(\$1,184)	(\$1,312)	(\$5,281)
Net Cash Movement	\$1,510	\$1,971	(\$4,482)
Cash flow			
Cash Balances:			
Beginning Checking	\$16,529	\$16,069	\$13,346
Beginning Savings	\$24,415	\$24,414	\$11,412
Opening Balance Total	\$40,944	\$40,483	\$24,758
Closing Checking	\$18,038	\$18,038	\$8,863
Closing Savings	\$24,416	\$24,416	\$11,412
Closing Balance Total	\$42,454	\$42,454	\$20,275
Cash Movement	\$1,510	\$1,971	(\$4,482)

FWT Newsletter – Spring 2023

Trail Chairman Report – Craig Hurlbut

Spring has arrived and we have already completed our first workday. On April 15 we had three crews working. The first group was cleaning trash off the Hojack Trail. The second group cleaned up Hickory Bark.

If you're on the Hojack Trail at Hard Rd. and head toward Klem Rd., after any big rain you'll find a pool of water covering the trail. You cannot pass without getting wet feet. Our third project was clearing the ditch so water would drain better, although we have more work to do there. If anyone has a mini excavator that would be a big help. We have many ditches to clear.

Below are the dates scheduled for the rest of 2023. We welcome anyone who will come out and help!

May	20	State Rd trail clearing
June	17	Whiting Rd trails
July	22	4 Mile Creek hauling gravel
August	19	Clear the John Ungar trail and install benches on the Hojack
September	16	Planting trees with our ReTree project
October	21	TBD

If you visit the Whiting Road trails you will notice the parking lot has been expanded. The Town did a great job there and it should alleviate the congestion on busy weekends.

Steward Reports from the Trails

Hojack Trail North – Bud Gearhart -

By now, you have probably seen that the work on the north end of the Hojack (Lake Road) has been completed

and the entrance to the trail is officially open. While the trail no longer crosses the road, they did a beautiful job carving a new ramp into the hillside and PAVING it. Wouldn't it be nice if the whole trail was like that.

If you see a mower in the Hojack this summer, that's us. Based on our assessment of our mowing requirements, it was decided that the Friends of Webster Trails should have our own mower. Since last summer, a mower and trailer were purchased and we plan to start mowing the Hojack ourselves this summer, as well as other locations. We are looking for mowing volunteers so, if you are interested in mowing the Hojack or any other location, please contact us through the website.

Hojack Trail Middle – Matt Steiner -

The longest portion of the trail and the most difficult to maintain due to standing water at a number of places. I'm steward but also Vegetation Manager for RG&E which owns the trail in order to maintain the power lines.

Hojack Trail South – John Boettcher -

This part of the trail from Holt to Philips Road gets quite a bit of use but is not very picturesque. There is a bike repair station at Sexton Park, and we look forward to historic content being posted on the Kiosk at 250.

Hickory Bark Trail – Sharon Galbraith

Winter winds did blow down several large trees, but, fortunately, none broke the boardwalk or the platform. Many thanks to Parks and Rec for cleaning up.

Shagbark hickories and beech trees will be leafing out soon. Did you know that young beech leaves are lime green in color? So lovely. At present, trout lilies (aka dogtooth violets) are in bloom and wild yellow iris leaves are up. Spice bushes are in full bloom - so lovely. Bright yellow coltsfoot is in bloom now, also, along the creek and at the start of the boardwalk. Spring beauties will be up soon.

Come enjoy a woody oasis in Webster. The platform is a lovely place to eat lunch or talk with friends.

Whiting Road Nature Preserve (WRNP) – Ron Happ

The trails in WRNP are now in good shape and have mostly dried out. This summer we hope to replace the two small boardwalks on the Orange trail. They will be wider and slightly longer.

FWT Newsletter – Spring 2023

We do have a large number of dead ash trees, and many have fallen across the trails which we try to clear as soon as we can. If you see trees blocking the trails, please report it to our website so that we can take care of it in a timely manner. If it is windy, it is a good idea to stay off the trails because of the falling trees and branches.

Green Trail WRNP – Linda Siple

The green trail is undergoing some improvements. The bridge farthest north near Lake Rd will be raised to reduce the accumulated mud and will be covered with a non-slip material. If this material works, then we will use it to cover the other bridges.

The windstorm brought down several trees on the green trail, but the forest elves once again cleared the trail. Thank you Elves!!

Fourmile Creek Preserve - Dennis Kuhn

If you haven't hiked the Fourmile Creek Preserve lately you might notice that there is a new addition to the blue, red and yellow trails. What was once a 2.4-mile hike is now a three-mile trek. This includes the addition of a six-tenths of a mile trail which is now officially the orange trail. This trail connects the red with the yellow trail. The combined acreage for the entire preserve is now about ninety acres and includes about eighteen acres of what was formerly the Eckler property.

Recently Larry Yost and Rich Morrill constructed some signs to inform hikers of the new trail system. The signs will soon be installed and will alert hikers to the junction of the orange trail where it meets the red and yellow trails. As you enter the orange trail you will quickly notice a newly constructed twenty-four-foot bridge that spans a step gully and makes walking the trail much more accessible. The bridge was designed by Hal Harris, a past president of FWT, and was constructed as an Eagle Scout project by Erich Stephany. Just before crossing the bridge, you'll get a nice view of Fourmile Creek as well as one of the dozen or more cars that are unique to the preserve. As you continue your hike, you'll notice some freshly installed blazes that will guide you to the yellow trail where you can continue your hike. You'll also notice evidence of the work of lots of FWT volunteers who helped clear the trail.

Future plans for the Fourmile Creek Preserve include adding some puncheon boardwalks to the orange trail and hauling stones to selected locations on the south side of the blue trail.

Happy trails to you...

John Ungar Nature Trail and Michael A. Johnson Nature Preserve – Norma Platt (steward)

I thought it couldn't be any better, but then the John Ungar Nature Trail met the Michael A Johnson Nature Preserve (new, as of 2022). I am unashamedly convinced that these two adjacent locations comprise the loveliest spot in Webster's Open Space. Consider the secluded and lush woods bordering Shipbuilders Creek. And then think about the wildflowers, birds, and mushrooms.

I hope you will be able to attend the grand opening for our newest Preserve (see newsletter frontispiece) so come if you can. You won't regret it!

ReTree Webster – Sarah White **To Everything There Is a Season**

"In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy." – William Blake

We are in the seed time, and ReTree is building on what we learned last year and putting it into practice for this year.

The seedlings nurtured in the plant nursery last year are finding their way into Webster's open spaces, and new seedlings are taking their place. Already, more than 25 new trees and shrubs have been added to Whiting Road Nature Preserve, and the Earth Day workday saw 45 volunteers potting bare-root seedlings to ready them for planting later this year or next.

"Winter is a season of recovery and preparation," according to Paul Theroux, and this spring's planting activity is a direct result of the preparation ReTree did over the winter. In addition to the planting and potting already done this year, the 2023 plan includes:

- Clearing woody invasives in Whiting Road Nature Preserve (completed in January).

FWT Newsletter – Spring 2023

- Nurturing the seedlings in the nursery for future planting in our open spaces.
- Monitoring what was planted last year in Whiting Road Nature Preserve and the Gosnell Big Woods, and clearing invasives around the new trees and shrubs as needed.
- Moving larger seedlings from the nursery into new areas and planting a smaller number of larger saplings on an autumn workday.
- Partnering with Genesee Land Trust to plant seedlings in Gosnell Big Woods.

Watch your email, the [FWT Meetup](#) group, and the [FWT Website](#) for upcoming events.

Last year we were but a seedling. This year we have strong roots and are starting to reach up to the sky. Join us!

Tree planting at WRNP



Potting of Seedlings at our nursery

These activities should result in more than 100 new trees and shrubs being planted this year, helping to ensure the future forests of Webster, and ReTree needs your help. Volunteers can help in many ways:

- Watering the seedlings in the plant nursery, especially over the drier summer months.
- Assisting with clearing invasives around our newest trees.
- Participating in the autumn workday to plant additional trees.



FWT Newsletter – Spring 2023

Membership Participation

This is an appeal to you members to become more involved in FWT. There are some big jobs like assuming a position on the Board as an officer or director. We are also looking for people to become trail stewards. Then there are lots of little jobs. The first of these is showing up at our workdays on the third Saturday of each month in the warmer season. The work on our trails continues year-round with mowing (see article), clearing, maintenance. You could volunteer to help by contacting the steward of the trail you are fond of and asking how you can help. If you can't find the time to do this, maybe you could help one of the officers or committee chairs with inside jobs like newsletter, website, event planning, grant writing, etc. Use the contact tab on the website to get more information.

Mowers Needed

FWT has purchased a mower for our trails, and we need folks to run them. This would be a great way to help with the maintenance of our trails. This would take about 3-4 hours each month, and the work would take place during the work week. Contact Craig Hurlbut (see board contact info later in this newsletter).

Michael A. Johnson Nature Preserve The Michael A. Johnson Nature Preserve is the newest addition to our Webster open spaces. The Donbovy family donated funds for the purchase of the land in memory of their deceased husband and father, Michael A. Johnson.

FWT created a trail into the Preserve which leads off the Hojack Trail between Drumm and VanAlstyne Roads. The Preserve is adjacent to John Ungar Nature Trail and the trails are connected.

The grand opening hike for this newest Preserve Trail is Saturday, June 3rd at 9 AM. Please Join us for a Kickoff group hike of 2023 to celebrate this new Trail and thank the Dombovy family and friends for their generous gift!

Hike Details:

- Meet at the intersection of Drumm Rd and the Hojack Trail at 9am. We will hike the Hojack Trail to the entrance of the New Michael A Johnson Trail. At that location we will share a few words about the Trail and have a brief ribbon cutting. We will then hike the new trail and then continue on to the John Ungar Trail, returning to the Hojack Trail and Drumm Rd.
- Parking is available at the Gosnell Big Wood parking lot at the intersection of Drumm and Vosburg. From there you can walk down Drumm Rd to the Hojack Trail entrance on Drumm. Alternatively, you can park at the Vosburg Hollow parking lot on Vosburg just west of Baker Road. From there you can walk the Hojack trail to Drumm Road. Our FWT Hike Leader will meet you there.
- Total hike distance from Drumm Rd meeting point = +/- 2 miles. The hike will have rolling terrain. Hiking boots/good sneakers are recommended.

Hope to see you there!



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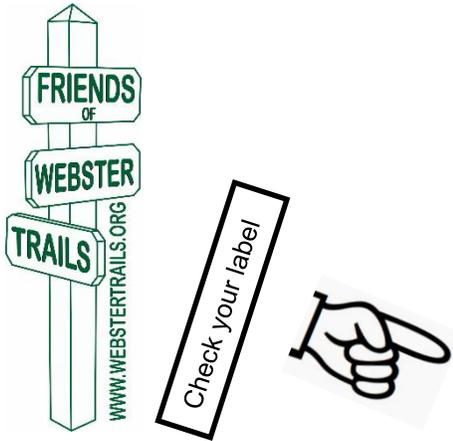
FWT Newsletter - Spring 2023



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ReTree Chairs	Norma Platt	see above	
	Sarah White	see above	

Friends of Webster Trails
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Friends of Webster Trails advocates for the preservation of the natural character of Webster's open space lands. We promote through sensible management, education, and low-impact access. We advise the Parks and Recreation Department and assist by planning, maintaining, and promoting recreation trails in the Town of Webster.

The Friends of Webster Trails newsletter is published each Spring and Fall

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